

REMARKS

The Office Action of September 15, 2008 was received and carefully reviewed. Claims 1-7 were pending prior to the instant amendment. Claims 1, 2, 5 and 6 have been canceled. Consequently, claims 3, 4, and 7 are currently pending in the instant application. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the currently pending rejections are requested for the reasons advanced in detail below.

The Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter with respect to claims 3, 4, and 7 is gratefully acknowledged.

Claims 1, 2, 5, and 6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) and (e) as being anticipated by Nomura et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,387,908 B1) and its application 09/508026 filed May 5, 2000. Without conceding the propriety of the rejection, claims 1, 2, 5, and 6 have been canceled.

In view of the foregoing remarks, this claimed invention is not rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicant therefore requests the entry of this response, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

In discussing the specification, claims, and drawings in this response, it is to be understood that Applicant in no way intends to limit the scope of the claims to any exemplary embodiments described in the specification and/or shown in the drawings. Rather, Applicant is entitled to have the claims interpreted broadly, to the maximum extent permitted by statute, regulation, and applicable case law.

Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite issuance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to telephone the undersigned patent agent at (202) 585-8316.

Respectfully submitted,

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